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ON-LINE LIBRARIES AND CYBRARIANS

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Abstrak : *Internet telah mengubah wajah perpustakaan dan bagaimana pustakawan bertugas hari ini. Perpustakaan tidak lagi terbandung oleh empat dinding. Ia telah berkembang ke ruang siber. Ramai pustakawan telahpun masuk ke dalam ruang siber untuk mendapatkan sumber dalam talian. Sesetengah pustakawan pula telah membantu menyusun sumber melalui home page masing-masing. Pengguna perpustakaan kini dapat melawat ke perpustakaan yang terkenal di seluruh dunia. Mereka boleh membuat carian pengarang, tajuk ataupun subjek dalam Internet. Semuanya ini dapat dibuat dengan selesa dari rumah atau pejabat dengan mengklik butang tetikus ataupun dengan menaip pada papan kekunci komputer. Apakah antara perpustakaan dalam talian? Apakah antara buku yang terdapat di dalam Internet? Apakah pustakawan akan menjadi pustakawan siber? Ini adalah antara perbincangan artikel di bawah.*

Katakunci : *Internet*

Abstract : *The Internet has changed the appearance of libraries and how librarians work today. The library is no longer confined to the four walls of a building. It has, instead, extended into cyberspace. Many librarians have gone into cyberspace to locate on-line resources. Some librarians have also helped organize the materials via their home pages. Library patrons are now, fortunately, able to visit famous libraries around the world. They can also make an author search, title search or subject search on the Internet. All these can be done in the comfort of the home or office at the click of a mouse or tapping of the keyboard keys. What are some of the on-line libraries? What are some of the books available on the Internet? Are librarians becoming cybrarians? These are among the highlights of the article.*

Keywords : *Internet*

Introduction

Two years ago, few Malaysians knew anything about the Internet. About the middle of 1995, about ten thousand Malaysians were connected to the Internet via Jaring, Malaysia's Internet gateway. Today, more than 200,000 Malaysians are using the Internet, mostly surfing for information on the World Wide Web (Web). The numbers are increasing. Information on the Web is also multiplying at a profound rate.

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The Internet seems to have become the most important force in computing in many countries including Malaysia. It began as a tool for scientists in the late 80s. Today, it has become a tool for the average person on the street. School children are taking to the Internet like ducks to water. Teenagers simply love to create Web pages describing themselves. These Web pages are Web documents that can be placed on a computer server anywhere in the world.

Libraries have also been affected by the Internet. They are no longer confined to the four walls of a building. They have extended into cyberspace, namely, the Internet.

In addition, librarians are no longer staying seated behind their desks staring at static computer screens or walking in between rows of book shelves. They have been surfing the Internet, locating useful documents and advising library patrons on some of the useful sites on the Internet. The more adventurous librarians have also created useful home pages for an estimated 50 million Internet users to surf into. Thus, we can now not only meet librarians face to face but on-line as well. The Internet is the largest computer network in the world. It comprises some 50,000 networks in about 150 countries. It has enabled users to send and receive electronic mail, download books, papers, magazine articles, computer software and other valuable resources into their computer hard disks or floppies.

Just how many of these resources are on the Internet? The **Altavista**, a search engine (<http://altavista.digital.com/>), identified more than 30 million Web pages located in over 275,600 Web servers on the Internet. Some 18 million Internet users access the Altavista site each day to help them locate these materials. Hence, it is not surprising that people from varying age groups have been attracted to join the cyberspace community. However, as can be expected, the younger group and the male population make up the majority of Internet users.

The Web sites are becoming more exciting these days. Previously simple and dull, they are now rich in content, employ attractive

graphics, adopt professional layouts and many have incorporated sound and video clips. There are all kinds of content in cyberspace. It is simply amazing.

Libraries with Web Sites

Since the development of the World Wide Web, many famous libraries are now on the Internet. We can surf right into their sites from the comfort of our homes.

The **Library of Congress** which contains the largest collection of books and print materials can be visited on the Internet (<http://lcweb.loc.gov>). Here, one of the useful things one can do is to make an author, title or subject search on-line. Great for those of us who need to find out what books are available today. Although we are not able to borrow them from the Library of Congress, we will at least know what books are available. We could then try to locate them in a library close to us or order them for purchase.

The **New York Public Library** (<http://www.nypl.org>) is another famous library that has gone on-line. Other on-line libraries are the **World Bank Depository Library** (<http://www.ua.ac.be/MAN/GUIDEE/t71.htm>), **US National Library of Medicine** (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/>) and the **United Nations Virtual Library** (<http://www.undp.org.br/undplib.htm>).

Examples of university libraries on the Web are: **Cornell University Library** (<http://www.library.cornell.edu/design/temp/home.html>) and **Carnegie Mellon University** (<http://www.library.cmu.edu/>). These are only a few. There are many others.

A virtual library that has been specially created for the Internet is the **Internet Public Library** (<http://ipl.sils.umich.edu/>). This site should appeal to both children and adults. The **Electric Library** (<http://www.elibrary.com>) should interest many. It contains 900 full-text magazines and over 150 full-text newspapers. Also available are two international newswires, thousands of books, maps, and special interest publications

Malaysia's **Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia** (<http://www.pnm.my>) is also on the Web. It is, in fact, one of the few local organizations that has had a Web presence for more than three years. **Sabah State Library** is also on the Web (<http://sbh.lib.edu.my/index1.htm>). Both local sites have the potential to become very useful sites for Malaysian Internet users. However, they have to include more on-line services before they can match the usefulness of the overseas library sites. For more library sites around the world, go to <http://www.yahoo.com/Reference/Libraries>

Web Sites Created by Librarians

Among the thousands of librarians around the world, it is estimated that a few hundred of them have created their own Web sites. They have compiled links to some of the best sites and have posted their Web pages somewhere on the Web for millions of Internet users to access into.

James-Catalano (1996), for example, discovered many librarians who have developed expertise in creating home pages on the Net. A page by Anne Prestamo, a librarian at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, lists links of interest for librarians on the Net (<http://www.uwm.edu/People/annepres/>).

More have been listed in the article in the August 1996 issue of *Internet World*. Or, if you prefer the electronic version, go to <http://www.iw.com/1996/08/cyberlib.html>.

Book Collections on the Web

There are thousands of on-line books on the Internet. The On-line Books Page (<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/Web/books.html>) is one of the best sources for electronic versions of books on all subjects ranging from call numbers A (General Works) through Z (Bibliography and Library Science).

For example, "10 Minute Guide to PowerPoint for Windows95" by Joe Kraynak and Faith Wempen is available at: http://www.mcp.com/que/new_users/tmg~power/index.htm. So is "City of Bits Space, Place, and the Infobahn" by William Mitchell ([\[mitpress.mit.edu/City_of_bits/index.html\]\(http://mitpress.mit.edu/City_of_bits/index.html\)\).](http://www</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Two other useful books for Internet newbies are: *The Internet Companion: A Beginner's Guide to Global Networking* (2nd edition) by Tracey LaQuey (<http://www.obs-us.com/obs/english/books/editions/obsxxx.htm>). Do you need the "Atlas to the World Wide Web" by Bob Powell and Karen Wickre? This can be accessed from <http://www.rhythm.com/~bpowell/Atlas/toc.htm>.

John Dewey's "Democracy and Education," originally published in 1916 is available at http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/academic/texts/dewey/d_e/title.html. Perhaps, another interesting book to read is "Education for Tomorrow's Jobs" (http://www.ul.cs.cmu.edu/books/tomorrow_s_jobs/tomorrow.html).

Other Non-Book Collections on the Web

Thousands of journal and magazine articles are available on-line. So are hundreds of newspapers (including our local *Berita Harian*, *The Star*, *Utusan Malaysia*, *Sin Chew Jit Poh* and *Nanyang Siang Pau*) from around the world. One of the best sites to surf to in order to get most of these resources is The Electronic Newsstand (<http://www.eneews.com/>).

The Future Cybrarians

About 22,000 librarians attended the annual conference of the American Library Association (ALA) in Manhattan last July 1996. It was reported (Smith, 1996) that it was telecommunications and not books that were uppermost in their minds.

At the conference, it was stressed that the public should have the same free and open access to electronic information as they have to print information. This implies that the Internet is here to stay and will be an important feature of one's daily life.

As only about one-sixth of American households have computers at home, it is imperative that Internet access be affordable and easily available in most places. Libraries

could begin to make Internet access available but the issue is how it is going to be paid for. Libraries in the rural areas would incur much higher telephone costs than libraries in the urban areas to connect to the Internet.

As the Internet proves itself worthy of frequent on-line visits, Malaysians are also going to need easy and affordable Internet access. Perhaps, libraries in Malaysia could begin to prepare themselves to take care of their community's Internet needs.

With regards to the librarians of the future, more and more organisations are finding the need for someone to look for information on the Internet (Waterman, 1995). Managers do not have the time to surf and to look for the information they need. Thus, librarians who already have the expertise to locate information on the shelves and racks of traditional libraries are most suitable for the job
(<http://www.tcp.ca/Nov95/Librarians.html>).

In addition, thousands of librarians are discussing electronically via on-line discussion groups or listservs. Visit **List of Listservs of School Librarianship**
(<http://hkein.ie.cuhk.hk/~mmhung/listserv.htm>) to find a discussion group that is most appealing for you to join. Subscription is on-line and it is free.

Conclusion

It is not too early to say that on-line libraries will soon open up the world of access to various types of resources around the world. What is more important however, is for librarians to grasp the new phenomenon of Internet playing a more and more important role in our daily lives. Librarians also need to prepare themselves so that they can meet the needs of the local community. In addition, the talented ones could look into the preparation of home pages for their own library patrons so as to give better value added service.

References

James-Catalano, C. N. (1996). Look to the librarians. *Internet World* 7(8), pp.28 & 30.

Smith, D. (1996, July 11). Libraries feel impact of the Internet. *Computimes*, p. 22.

Waterman, M. P. (1995). Librarians of the future.
(<http://www.tcp.ca/Nov95/Librarians.html>)

Malaysian Newspapers on the Web

Berita Harian

<http://www.jaring.my/bharian>

Utusan Malaysia

<http://www.asiaconnect.com.my/utusan/>

Nanyang Siang Pau


<http://www.asia-online.com/nsp/>

Sin Chew Jit Poh

<http://www.founder.net.my/sinchew>

The Star

<http://www.jaring.my/~star>



Cornell University Library

Welcome to the Template Library



URL: <http://www.templatelib.cornell.edu/>

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